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Official Records

First Committee
12th meeting
Tuesday, 21 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with its programme of work and timetable, the First Committee will continue with the second phase of its work, namely the thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items.

As stated in document A/C.1/58/CRP.2, this morning's meeting has been allocated for statements by delegations regarding other weapons of mass destruction and outer space disarmament aspects. Delegations are also kindly invited to introduce draft resolutions. I would like to add that those delegations that are prepared to do so are invited — if we have time available at the end of this morning's discussion — to move on to the next cluster, conventional weapons, which, in the document to which I referred, has been allocated for tomorrow.

I repeat: those delegations that are prepared to do so are invited to make statements and to introduce draft resolutions on the cluster, conventional weapons, which we have allocated for tomorrow.

Mr. Shaw (Australia): As highlighted in our statement in the general debate, the threat posed by the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons is real and growing. In the interests of collective security, therefore, Australia fully supports all efforts to address those threats, especially those efforts that can deliver tangible results in real and practical ways. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) play a central role in this respect. We fully support the multilateral programme of work under the BWC. We were pleased to participate in the first meeting of experts, held in Geneva in August this year, and we are particularly encouraged by the active participation of experts from all regions of the world. By working together, we can strengthen implementation of the BWC this year in the areas of legislation and bio-security, thereby reducing the potential for the misuse of biological agents. We therefore look forward to continuing this important work at the first Annual Meeting of the States Parties in November.

It is within this context that Australia welcomes and fully supports the draft resolution on BWC, A/C.1/58/L.37, as introduced by Hungary. We particularly welcome those paragraphs of the draft resolution that give expression to the outcomes of the Fifth Review Conference and that call upon all States parties to participate in their implementation.

Similarly, Australia welcomes the outcome of the first CWC Review Conference, which took place at The Hague earlier this year, and we fully support the CWC draft resolution (A/C.1/58/L.41), as introduced by the representative of Poland. We welcome in

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particular those paragraphs in the draft resolution that call for full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention.

Australia very much hopes that States will continue to endorse the work being done under the BWC and the CWC and that both of those draft resolutions will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to discuss the issue of outer space. On 15 and 16 October, China successfully conducted its first manned-spacecraft flight. We will consistently strive to promote humankind's lofty aspiration to ensure the peaceful use of outer space while continuing to work with all other countries throughout the world to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space.

Over the past 50 years or so, the development of space technology has significantly contributed to economic, scientific, technological and social progress throughout the world. Our daily lives, commercial activities and scientific research have become increasingly related to outer-space issues. As such, outer space has become part and parcel of modern civilization.

However, the development of space technology has also led to research and development in the area of space weapons and the application of military technology in outer space. Recent discussions have focused on the control and occupation of outer space, and the risk of the weaponization of outer space is increasing daily. Existing international legal instruments are not sufficient effectively to curb the weaponization of, or an arms race in, outer space.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind. To ensure its peaceful use, and to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space is in the common interest and the common responsibility of all countries. Past experience in the areas of disarmament and arms control makes clear that, to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space, we must not remain idle until outer-space weapons have been put in place and resulted in destruction.

We cannot have a situation in which one country is the first to place weapons in outer space, with other States following suit and the prospect of space-weapon proliferation looming large. The key is therefore to take preventive measures, such as the establishment of international legal instruments, so as to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer space.

For these reasons, China made proposals and offered suggestions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in documents of the Conference on Disarmament in 1985, 2000 and 2001. In 2002, China and the Russian Federation, together with the delegations of Viet Nam, Indonesia, Belarus, Zimbabwe and the Syrian Arab Republic, jointly submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a working paper entitled "Possible Elements For a Future International Legal Agreement on the Prevention of the Deployment of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects".

On 25 September last, the Russian Federation announced its willingness not to be the first to deploy offensive weapons in outer space. It indicated that it was in favour of the development of a comprehensive agreement on this issue, and it invited all countries with space potential to join its initiative. That is a very positive step forward in the same direction as indicated by China's proposals.

In the same spirit, on 7 August this year, China expressed its willingness to join the consensus on the "Five Ambassadors" initiative with regard to the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the other parties will live up to the expectations of the international community and respond positively, so as to help reach agreement on a comprehensive and balanced work programme for the Conference, with a view to conducting substantive work on all important issues — including the prevention of an arms race in outer space — towards the negotiation of relevant international legal instruments.

The First Committee reflects the wishes of all countries and peoples with regard to disarmament and international security. Over the years, the General Assembly has adopted many resolutions on outer space, which have illustrated the willingness of the overwhelming majority of countries and peoples to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This year, China will once again co-sponsor the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In order to ensure a peaceful and tranquil sky for future generations, we stand ready to work with the international community in continuing to attach great

importance to the issue of outer space and in pushing forward concrete measures aimed at the complete prohibition of outer-space weapons.

Mr. Toth (Hungary): Under agenda item 80, I should like to introduce, on behalf of Hungary, the draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention. Before I do so, however, I should like to express to you, Mr. Chairman, my delegation's appreciation for the very efficient, dynamic and thoughtful manner in which you are guiding our proceedings, both in formal and informal settings.

The draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), in its preamble notes with satisfaction that there are 150 States parties to the Convention, including all of the permanent members of the Security Council. It refers to the call of the General Assembly upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conferences, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Third Review Conference and to provide such information and data in conformity with its standardized procedure to the Secretary-General on an annual basis.

Still in the preamble, the draft resolution welcomes the reaffirmation made in the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of biological weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

Finally, in its preamble, the draft resolution recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference to hold three annual meetings of the States parties of one-week duration each year, commencing in 2003, until the Sixth Review Conference, and to hold a two-week meeting of experts to prepare each meeting of the States parties.

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution notes with satisfaction the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, reaffirms the call upon all signatory that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay and calls on those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties to it at an early stage, thus contributing to the universal adherence to the Convention.

Paragraph 2 welcomes the information and data provided to date, and reiterates the call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Finally, paragraph 3 recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference, and calls upon the States parties to the Convention to participate in its implementation.

The expectation is that the draft resolution on the Biological Weapons Convention will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka to introduce draft resolution A/58/C.1/L.44.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We pledge our full support to you in your work and express our appreciation for the way in which you are conducting the work of the Committee. We wish you all the best for a successful conclusion of the work of the Committee.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Nobuyasu Abe upon his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. We are very happy to see him on the podium, and we look forward to working with in the future on disarmament issues in international forums.

I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on prevention of an arms race in outer space, as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.44. It has for years been a privilege for my delegation, together with the delegation of Egypt, to submit similar draft resolutions in the First Committee for the attention of members and of the international community at large. This year we have been joined by an unprecedented number of other sponsors, the list of which is too long to read out. Although almost all the sponsors belong to the movement of non-aligned countries, it is our view and belief that the thrust and substance of the draft resolution represent the preponderant will of all the people in the world.

We are all familiar with the awe and respect with which outer space and celestial bodies were treated by our forefathers — indeed, by every succeeding generation of humankind. It was generally believed that space was touched by the divine, that it was imbued with a serene atmosphere and would remain

peaceful forever. It is also our firm belief that outer space, as the next frontier of humankind, should remain a peaceful arena for all time for the benefit of all living beings on Earth.

It has been emphasized and reiterated in many forums that outer space is the common heritage of all humankind. It would be the greatest folly of the human race to allow outer space to become the next arena for an arms race, at a time when most people on Earth live precariously — both socially and economically — and are affected by multifaceted conflicts. We simply cannot afford even a terrestrial arms competition at this juncture of human history, and precious human, material and energy resources are required for more noble purposes than fighting wars on a new frontier.

Acts of terrorism that are taking place in many parts of the world provide ample reason for States Members of the United Nations to assess how human security can be ensured. We are required, individually and collectively, to search for solutions to confront the abominable phenomenon of terrorism. In that regard, it is becoming more and more evident that a weapons-based approach is not a panacea for the ills affecting human security, including terrorism. While terrorism, for whatever reason it is committed, cannot be justified, we have concluded that the deployment of exotic weapons — even those with overwhelming firepower — cannot completely secure human security in a world that is becoming globalized, democratized and liberalized.

In this context, taking the arms race into outer space would, in our view, be counterproductive and meaningless, if we cannot achieve human security on the ground. The world requires resources on the ground for multifaceted, multidimensional tasks to deter destabilizing forces and terrorists from terrorizing the civilized world.

Since time immemorial, it has been popular wisdom that every action has a reaction and that the stability of a situation depends on balance and equilibrium. When such a balance, both material and perceptive, eludes a society or the world at large, instability has always reigned, resulting in conflict and calamity. In this context, most perceive that the sense of strategic balance that currently exists in the world could come under strain if outer space became an arena for an arms race.

It is now recognized that breathtaking advances in technology have made it possible for outer space to be used for multifaceted tasks that have an impact upon Earth. Most of these innovative uses are beneficial to humankind, and some add to peace and stability. Nevertheless, weaponization and an arms race beyond peaceful uses for offensive or belligerent purposes would no doubt rupture any prevailing balance, leading to instability.

The time has come for the international community to focus its attention on outer space with a view to preventing that pristine environment from becoming a battleground for military supremacy rather than a place of stability. It is patently clear that taking measures to prevent an arms race is more effective, less complicated and less expensive than taking measures to roll back such a race after it has begun. There will, no doubt, be substantial peace dividends arising out of the non-belligerent use of outer space. The benefits of peaceful activities in space, which are now confined mostly to a few existing and emerging space-capable countries, could also be made available to more countries as a result.

It is in this context that the sponsors of the draft resolution wish to introduce their text for consideration and adoption by the First Committee. As members may have observed, the text, as in previous years, recalls and affirms several previous international agreements on this issue, including that forged at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to take further measures with a view to arriving at appropriate negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space. The draft resolution reiterates the complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts; here, we wish to highlight the importance of greater transparency in sharing information on all bilateral efforts in this field.

It is the view of the sponsors of the draft resolution that the Conference on Disarmament — the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum — has the primary role in the negotiation of multilateral agreements, as appropriate, on this subject. The draft resolution invites the Conference on Disarmament to commence work towards that end. It is our expectation that, at its 2004 session, the Conference on Disarmament will be able to establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with an agreed, appropriate, mandate. Time is certainly running out for action on this important issue,

and we appreciate the valuable contributions made recently in the Conference on Disarmament by China and the Russian Federation on this issue, with a view to commencing work in the Conference on Disarmament.

There have been several suggestions either to alter or to strengthen the text of the draft resolution based on the national positions and the priorities of several States. In this regard, we respect the preference of some countries for a gradual, step-by-step approach to arriving at a solution to prevent an arms race in outer space. In this context, in a spirit of compromise and recognizing the need for accommodation of all views, we have produced a text similar to that of last year, with only technical updates. We, the sponsors, are mindful that the text of the draft resolution should enjoy the widest, if not universal, support, so that the collective will of the international community can be reflected in a single text. We therefore hope that all member States of the First Committee will be able to support the draft resolution, so that it can both reflect the general view of the international community and can make a contribution towards the long overdue action needed on the issue, both within the Conference on Disarmament and elsewhere.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): It is an honour and pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.41 on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The preparations and work on the draft resolution over the past year have been significantly influenced by important developments and events in the area of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

From 28 April to 9 May 2003, representatives of the 151 States members of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) met in The Hague for the first Review Conference of the Convention. At that Review Conference the States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the object and purposes of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This week, the Conference of the States Parties is being held in The Hague. The participating States will give their guidance on the implementation of the decisions of the Review Conference. The Chemical Weapons Convention is a crucial element in the legal framework aimed at strengthening international security and ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Today, as we know only too well, the full and effective implementation of CWC has acquired additional significance, as it constitutes an important contribution to the global fight against terrorism.

Since the Convention and its implementation contribute to the enhancement of international peace and security, it is important that the United Nations adopt a resolution on the subject and thereby lend its support in promoting the object and purposes of the Convention. Proceeding from that fundamental observation and taking into account the results of the first Review Conference, Poland has prepared a new text of the draft resolution.

Our basic assumption and goal was to ensure the same consensus approval of the resolution that it has received over the past five years. Consensus is crucial to providing unequivocal United Nations support for the implementation of the Convention.

The draft text was presented at open-ended consultations held on Tuesday, 14 October, with the participation of over 30 delegations. During those consultations and at many bilateral meetings — 57 actually — delegations expressed their support for the draft text and their readiness to join a consensus.

I would now like to present the major changes that have been made in the draft resolution as compared with the resolution adopted last year. As I stressed before, the draft reflects the results of the first Review Conference. New language has been added, taken from the text of the Political Declaration of the Review Conference. Six new operational paragraphs reinforce the text of last year's resolution in three spheres: the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention, its implementation and the fostering of international cooperation and assistance.

I would like to emphasize that a new paragraph 10, on fostering international cooperation and assistance, was introduced into the resolution for the first time. This is an important development, as it goes far beyond the old text.

An important task in the elaboration of the draft resolution on CWC has been to ensure the broadest possible international support. The Polish delegation has therefore undertaken a series of consultations on the possibility of opening the text to co-sponsorship. In the course of those extensive consultations, however, we found that we were strongly advised against

opening the text to co-sponsorship, mainly because it was felt that it would be extremely difficult to ensure a regional and political balance among new sponsors and to preserve the integrity of the draft. Delegations expressed their clear preference for the preservation of a broad consensus around the draft resolution on CWC as it stands. We have decided to follow that advice and not to seek co-sponsors. Poland will thus remain the draft resolution's sole sponsor.

At the same time, we are ready for consultations in Geneva and in The Hague on the possibility of achieving a broad and balanced co-sponsorship for the resolution in years to come.

Let me express our gratitude and thanks to all the delegations that participated in the extensive consultations on the new draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those consultations confirmed the existence of broad international political support for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The draft resolution before the Committee is the material expression of that support.

Overall, we are convinced that the text of this year's draft resolution is well balanced. It gives unequivocal support on the part of the United Nations to the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. Therefore, the delegation of Poland asks for the adoption of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Wide-ranging exploration of outer space and the development of practical applications give the entire international community the possibility of benefiting from outer space activities. National space programmes and international projects seek to resolve such problems as environmental monitoring, counteracting natural disasters, navigation and land surveys, and air traffic and maritime navigation control and to widen the range and capacity of television and radio broadcasts, among other services. In order to resolve those issues, it is essential to ensure that outer space remains a sphere of international cooperation and that it is not transformed into another theatre for military operations. That is the objective of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.44, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", which was introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka.

Despite the fact that there are no offensive weapons in outer space today, we cannot exclude the possibility that they will be placed there in the future. Unfortunately, the existing norms of international law cannot provide a reliable shield against the future placement of weapons in outer space. The Russian Federation considers the possible use of outer space for military purposes to be very dangerous and has consistently worked to prevent this. We are convinced that we must work together with the entire international community and demonstrate the necessary political will to prevent the weaponization of outer space and prevent it from being used for military competition.

That issue is one of the priorities on the disarmament agenda. It was raised by the President of the Russian Federation in his statement to the General Assembly during the present session as one of the most important issues affecting the future of humanity. Key elements in Russia's position on the use of outer space remain the prohibition of the use of outer space for military purposes, the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force against space objects, confidence-building measures in the field of outer space, and ensuring transparency and predictability in all outer space exploration.

At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Russia submitted a proposal for a moratorium on the placement of weapons in outer space until such time as appropriate international agreements have been reached. We reaffirm the Russian Federation's willingness to commit itself to such a moratorium immediately if other space Powers do likewise. Russia has also taken the confidence-building initiatives in areas such as providing information about planned launches of space vehicles along with their purposes and orbital data; that information is available on the website of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

That is also the objective of a working paper, prepared by Russia, China and a group of co-authors, entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects", which was distributed at the Conference on Disarmament and at the United Nations. That document received a very positive reaction and generated considerable interest. Within the framework of informal multilateral activities and as a result of bilateral contacts, there have been a number of

constructive ideas and specific proposals aimed at improving the substance of the paper.

We agree with the provision of the draft resolution that the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects should be played by the Conference on Disarmament. This year, in order to break the deadlock at the Conference, achieve a compromise on its programme of work and ensure that that work commences as soon as possible — particularly on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space — Russia took an important step forward by agreeing to support a compromise on the draft programme of work: the so-called "five ambassadors" proposal. We hope that the Conference will seize this opportunity to begin substantive work.

We should like once again to reaffirm our opposition to the possible placement of weapons in outer space. It is difficult for us to agree with the idea that such placement is inevitable and dictated by technological progress. We must all be consistent in neutralizing one of the main threats in today's world — the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery — and must do everything in our power to prevent the spread of offensive weapons into outer space. We believe that preventing the proliferation of weapons in outer space will make a positive contribution to preventing such proliferation on Earth.

Therefore, the Russian Federation supports draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.44, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", and once again serves as a sponsor of the draft.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): At the outset, let me express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I am convinced that, under your able leadership, this body will be able to conclude its work with the utmost efficiency.

It was encouraging to note that, throughout the general debate of the First Committee, many delegations acknowledged positive developments in the field of chemical and biological weapons. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for his detailed briefing on the achievements made in the field of chemical weapons and on the tasks that lie ahead for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). A political declaration agreed by consensus at the First Review Conference reaffirmed the foundations of the chemical weapons ban, embodied in the provisions of the Convention. That consensus was an important achievement in itself, as it was the result of a multilateral effort at a time when issues related to proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and non-compliance posed pressing challenges to the international community.

Without universal accession to the Convention, the ultimate goal of a world free of chemical weapons cannot be achieved. In that context, my delegation is pleased that the Director General of the OPCW noted, in particular, the need for key countries in the Middle East and on the Korean peninsula to accede to the Convention. In that regard, we would like to reiterate the call made by the Secretary-General, at the ongoing eighth session of the Conference of States Parties to the CWC, to all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay.

Furthermore, universalization is necessary to cope with the increasing threat of chemical terrorism and other risks associated with the proliferation of dangerous chemical materials. In his statement to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, the Secretary-General stated that the Convention could, if fully implemented, be a powerful instrument in preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. As also aptly recognized by the Director-General, universal accession to and full implementation of the Convention would be the most effective guarantee against weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands.

Therefore, my delegation lends its full support to this year's draft resolution on CWC, just introduced by the representative of Poland. My delegation believes that the draft resolution greatly bolsters the three pillars of the Convention, namely universalization, full and effective implementation and technical cooperation.

The first Meeting of Experts on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) offered an opportunity for useful discussion on two timely and relevant topics relating to national implementation of the Convention, namely the enactment of penal legislation, and bio-safety and security.

The lack of a verification protocol should not serve as a justification for any State party to the Convention to fail to equip itself with effective measures at the national level. It is necessary to take adequate steps to translate the prohibitions of the Convention into action through all legislative, administrative and regulatory means.

Multilateral arms control and non-proliferation agreements should not remain static, but should rather grow stronger and more efficient in fighting against new and emerging threats. In order for the BWC to become a viable and resilient mechanism, assessment of developments affecting its objectives and operations must be carried out periodically. In this regard, the increasing need for safety and security measures must be addressed in the face of the ever-expanding threat posed by biological weapons in the current international security environment.

As stated in our national general statement, my delegation looks forward to a successful conclusion of the meeting of States parties in November. Moreover, we support the draft resolution on BWC, which was just introduced by the representative of Hungary. My delegation believes that the draft resolution injects impetus into the new process agreed upon at the fifth Review Conference and calls upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the process with a view to securing the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Shervani (India): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", under agenda item 73(w), contained in document A/C.1/58/L.35 and co-sponsored by Afghanistan, Bhutan, Colombia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and India.

India first introduced this draft resolution in the fifty-seventh General Assembly to give expression to the widely shared concern of the international community about the heightened dangers posed by the risk of terrorists getting access to weapons of mass destruction or related materials and technology. In recognition of this threat, the draft resolution aimed at underlining the urgent need to deal with it at the national, regional and global levels.

The adoption of resolution 57/83 without vote was a measure of the widespread support for that resolution, reflecting the shared concerns of the international community and the common determination to combat terrorism, in particular its linkages with weapons of mass destruction. The report of the Secretary General (A/58/208) and its addendum pursuant to resolution 57/83 include views submitted by Member States and the work undertaken by the relevant international organizations.

Events since we met last year have only underlined the growing concern of the international community over this threat. There is a growing recognition by the international community of the threat posed by terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the urgent need to prevent this acquisition.

These concerns have been reflected in the statements of the United Nations Secretary-General, the work of his Disarmament Advisory Board, the Final Document of the Kuala Lumpur Non-Aligned Movement Summit and in the deliberations of regional organizations and other groupings. The International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons are among several international organizations that have focused on this threat.

It cannot be ruled out that terrorists and other non-State actors in networks that span the globe may gain access to weapons of mass destruction, related materials and technologies. We must not underestimate the threat nor can there be an expectation of advance warning in all cases, nor can we afford to wait for such a catastrophic incident to take place, or its horrific aftermath, to spur us into action. We have a collective responsibility and interest in prevention. Our collective position will in fact send a strong deterrent signal to those forces contemplating such threats.

This is not a problem that is country or region specific, but has global reach and implications. Therefore, it requires a collective effort, through a truly multilateral approach, that would increase the chances of it being accepted and supported by the widest possible constituency, thereby also ensuring its effectiveness.

We believe that the threat of weapons-of-mass-destruction terrorism will require concerted action at multiple levels, increasing and strengthening national capacities, as well as new levels and forms of regional and international cooperation, only as part of a

comprehensive global effort to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

We hope that this draft resolution will act as a platform for fostering greater understanding as well as impetus for joint action before this threat rears its ugly head.

The Indian delegation, along with the other sponsors, expresses its sincere hope that the draft resolution will receive the support of all delegations and would be adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): It is my pleasure to introduce the draft resolution on missiles, under agenda item 73, General and complete disarmament (A/C.1/58/L.4). This draft is presented for the fifth consecutive year. Unlike the previous one, Egypt and Indonesia are also sponsors of this draft resolution.

Following the establishment of the first ever United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects by the Secretary-General in response to resolution 55/33 A, the first United Nations study on missiles was submitted to the fifty-seventh session in the form of a report (A/57/229). The report of the first United Nations Panel of Experts on Missiles was welcomed by the General Assembly last year, as well as by the Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement held in February 2003 in Kuala Lumpur. In paragraph 78 of the Kuala Lumpur Final Document it states:

> "The Heads of State or Government welcomed the report prepared by the Panel of Governmental Experts on the Issue of Missiles in all its aspects, which marked the first time the United Nations considered this issue. They noted with satisfaction the convening of another Panel of Governmental Experts to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects."

In response to resolution 57/71 (2002), some countries, including mine, transmitted their views on the report of the Panel contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/117 and Add.1 and 2) to the current session of the General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their untiring preparation of this compilation. In the present draft resolution the General Assembly would take note of that compilation and, at the same time, in order to give another chance to those who have not been able to convey their opinions this year, request the Secretary-General to further seek the views of Member States on that report.

The report prepared by the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles marked the first time that the United Nations considered this issue. Taking into account the complexities involved, it is therefore imperative to further study the issue of missiles. Moreover, the Panel of Experts itself, in the conclusion of its report, stated that the issues identified by the Panel need to be further explored. Hence, last year, the General Assembly by adoption of resolution 57/71 (2002), has requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts, to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects and submit a report for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. In this draft, by repeating that request, a phrase has been added that refers to the establishment of the Panel in 2004 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. This would enable the Secretary-General to submit a report to the next session as it has been approved last year.

Missiles are among the main components of military operations as the last resort of military strategies. Today all major Powers in the world have reserved a permanent role for the missiles in their military planning. Missiles are part and parcel of nuclear weapons as one of their means of delivery. In the conventional field, similarly, many countries as well as military alliances have defined a specific role for missiles to carry out strikes to deter an adversary from launching military offences. Missiles are a global issue; partial or very narrowly defined measures to deal with them will not be conducive to results. Present developments and the use of certain cruise missiles which can carry nuclear warheads in submarines for attacks on certain regions truly prove the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the issue of missiles should be considered in all its aspects.

The recent news with respect to the possible deployment of cruise missiles which was confirmed by the relevant officials, has challenged the claims of those who were arguing that only one kind of missiles, namely ballistic missiles, constitute the real danger and should be considered the priority.

We hope that the establishment of the second United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts and their deliberations on the issue of missiles in all its aspects would result in a better understanding of this global issue and a search for complementary measures to explore ways and means to safeguard the international community against the threats posed by some types of missiles. As a means to discuss and prepare specific recommendations with a view to dispelling the concerns of all States on the issue of missiles in all their aspects, we are sincerely hopeful that the broadest support will be accorded to this draft resolution.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): On the subject of other weapons of mass destruction, in spite of setbacks on nuclear and related issues, my delegation has welcomed the progress made with regard to two other categories of weapons of mass destruction — chemical and biological. As regards the former, efforts to bring the Chemical Weapons Convention closer to universal adherence has made some modest progress. As regards the latter, while there was a stalemate to conclude a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, an agreement was reached to hold a series of annual meetings from now through 2005 to discuss ways and means of effectively implementing the Convention at the national level. The international community still has some way to go towards the total destruction of chemical weapons although substantial progress has been made. Meanwhile, the threat of bioterrorism has emerged following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and we need to address the role of the Biological Weapons Convention in mitigating this threat.

It would be erroneous to underestimate the role of weapons of mass destruction. The twenty-first century has already set in motion some ominous developments that augur a prominent role for these weapons. Given the current research on lasers, space-based weapons and directed-energy systems, one can foresee the possibility for the emergence of even more potent weapons of mass destruction technologies within the next quarter century. At a minimum, we are likely to witness the emergence of new anti-satellite laser weapons and techniques that could be used to block enemy use of satellites and commercial communications in the event of war and hostilities. The ramifications of this issue and how to deal with it need to be addressed in the appropriate forums.

On the issue of the disarmament aspects of outer space, the delegation of Indonesia is of the view that the prevention of an arms race in outer space continues to be an issue of controversy. It is one of the reasons for stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament as efforts for a negotiating mandate has continued to elude us.

Existing international agreements are inadequate to prevent an arms race in outer space. Hence, any future legal regime should ban all military uses of outer space and adhere to the principle of exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humanity. Such a regime should also be based on openness and transparency in space and related activities.

This issue has assumed greater urgency due to the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and plans for national missile defence that pose new challenges. There is also increasing concern over testing and development of missiles in some regions. Pending the initiation of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue that would lead to the consolidation of the existing legal regimes, we call upon the States concerned to abide by the existing agreements and to refrain from actions that would be contrary to the peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Events over the past few years around the world have demonstrated the importance and need for the United Nations to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. Experience has shown how timely it was to raise this issue, which is reflected in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on missiles. We have traditionally voted in support of that resolution, and we intend to vote in support of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.4 this year. Our position is dictated by the need to find a means of reducing the potential threat posed by missiles and thereby to help strengthen international security and stability.

Thanks to the resolution on missiles the international community for the first time has undertaken an in-depth examination of the issue. We are strongly convinced that it should continue to be a subject of thorough discussions within the United Nations. Only when this issue is dealt with by the most universal and representative Organization will it be possible to reach an outcome that will be acceptable to the entire international community. That has always

been Russia's position in all forums where the issue of missiles proliferation is discussed, including in the Panel of Governmental Experts that was established pursuant to resolution 55/33 A on missiles. We believe that now, following the adoption of the Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, it is necessary to give further impetus to the work of the Panel of Experts and ensure that it seeks to develop the appropriate legal framework in the area of missiles. In that regard, it is important to focus on considering concrete measures aimed at preventing the proliferation of missiles while not infringing on the legitimate security interests and the economic development of States. In the near future the Panel could develop recommendations with respect to further United Nations activities in this sphere, provided, of course, that the requisite political will exists among Member States.

We hope that the Panel of Governmental Experts could, inter alia, consider the possibility of developing an international treaty to create a global missile non-proliferation regime.

The groundwork has been laid for continued United Nations work in the area of missiles: there is the report of the Secretary-General on missiles, which reflects initial results in the study of the missile problem; there are a number of recommendations proposed by a range of States, including the Russian proposal to establish a global monitoring system for missiles and missile technology; and there are new ideas and proposals that have appeared since the adoption of the resolution.

In conclusion, the draft resolution and the Secretary-General's report on missiles provide, in our view, the necessary and correct guidelines for future work in this sphere.

Mr. Parai (Canada): Space security is an important priority for Canada. We know this holds true for many of the States represented here today. Steps that we take can help to ensure that humanity's future in outer space is both peaceful and based on shared values and practical cooperation.

Canada's concept of space security includes equitable access to an outer space that is usable and safe for peaceful purposes. Such an approach would be consistent with existing non-offensive military uses of space. It stresses the value of multilateral engagement to meet the security needs of all stakeholders and seeks to avoid an arms race involving asymmetric technologies and unpredictable results.

As part of its space security approach, Canada strongly supports the development of international law to protect the global community's orbital assets and to ensure progress in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. With over 500 active satellites currently in orbit — with an estimated commercial value of US$ 86 billion — it is clear that the world has an enormous stake in maintaining an outer space free from the threat of destruction.

An integrated treatment of diverse and increasingly inter-related space issues is needed. Such integration could tie together work being undertaken by the International Telecommunication Union on the international coordination of radio frequencies and orbital slots, the Conference on Disarmament's efforts towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the efforts of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Integration of action on these fronts could create a structure of interrelated commitments that could serve as building blocks towards the eventual development of a comprehensive, multilaterally agreed instrument in the space security field.

Space weaponization is only one of many aspects of space security, but one that has received much attention. Space remains the last major area into which weapons have not been introduced. Canada shares the interest of many States in ensuring the protection of orbital assets, but believes that there are options other than space weaponization that could effectively, singly or in combination, achieve that aim. Canada remains convinced that one of the best ways to ensure space security, and thereby contribute to global security, is agreement on a prohibition against orbital weapons.

Weaponization would make satellites increasingly vulnerable — the satellites we depend upon to communicate with each other, to monitor the environment, to facilitate remote sensing and to provide education and medical services, as well as to support domestic policing, border control and search and rescue. The security of existing ballistic missile launch warning systems, as well as the surveillance systems that support the verification of compliance with international treaties on weapons of mass destruction, would also be threatened, in particular by anti-satellite weapons. Weaponization could thus

undermine global and human security and should be avoided.

Canada sees a growing need to negotiate a multilateral convention on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this regard, we are encouraged by the recent progress made towards the resumption of substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament and we urge all members to facilitate the Conference's taking up the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space.

With the growing commercial and public developments in outer space, Canada is looking to cooperate with like-minded States in the creation of a clear and integrated vision of space security. Civil society has an important stake in space security, and Canada encourages their engagement in this process as well.

As is evident from what I have said, Canada believes outer space represents a promising area for preventive diplomacy. We hope to stimulate more attention to this subject and would be grateful to hear the views of others on how best to secure outer space for non-offensive military and civilian purposes.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I apologize for taking the floor once again, Mr. Chairman, but with your permission I wish to speak briefly on missiles, a formidable means of delivery for weapons of mass destruction.

Korean concern over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been matched by increasing alarm over missiles, the most formidable choice of delivery systems for such weapons. Moreover, the unregulated development, testing, deployment and spread of ballistic missiles have given rise to grave concern, particularly in regions of high tension. Despite the efforts of the international community to address the problems related to missiles, no global instrument exists as yet in that area.

In that context, the Republic of Korea welcomes and supports the Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Owing to their great speed, penetration capabilities, increasing accuracy, multifarious deployment options and all-weather capabilities, ballistic missiles have long posed a significant threat to regional and global peace and stability. As is well described in the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts report on missiles, the increasing number, range, technological sophistication and geographical spread of ballistic missiles are viewed as overriding issues of security concern in that field. Moreover, the potentially lethal combination of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction warrants urgent collective efforts to reduce the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Indeed, it is by no means a coincidence that the most serious concerns about ballistic missile proliferation persist in regions where the threat of weapons of mass destruction proliferation is the highest.

In the current climate, the Hague Code of Conduct can serve as a global non-proliferation non-building initiative, by promoting responsible behaviour in the field of ballistic missiles. Through its transparency and confidence-building measures the Hague Code of Conduct can complement and reinforce measures already existing at the national, regional and multilateral levels.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the positive outcome of the second meeting of States subscribing to the Hague Code of Conduct, which was held in early October. As a significant confidence-building measure to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles we hope that the Hague Code of Conduct will achieve universal adherence in the near future.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to mention that a new United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles is expected to begin its work early next year. The Republic of Korea will make its due contribution to the work of that Panel, as it did during the first United Nations missiles Panel of 2001-2002.

Mr. Varma (India): Mr. Chairman, we seek your indulgence to present two draft resolutions, which in the normal course of procedure should have been presented yesterday. With your permission, we will proceed to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.34, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", which has been sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cuba, Haiti, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Zambia and India.

The cold war ended more than a decade ago. With its passing we had hoped that nuclear doctrines stressing hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons and their associated nuclear postures would also pass into

history. Unfortunately, that legacy and its consequent nuclear dangers are still with us today. With the end of the cold war there is no longer any justification for thousands of nuclear weapons to be maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert. Such a state of alert poses the risk of an accidental or unintentional launch in response to a false alarm or a miscommunication, as well as the danger that those weapons could fall into the wrong hands. We have the responsibility to prevent disasters with irreversible consequences of such dangerous proportions.

India first introduced the resolution, "Reducing nuclear danger", in 1998 and it has received the wide support of the General Assembly every year. That resolution makes a modest and practical proposal for the review of nuclear doctrines and immediate steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

In his March 2000 report to the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General proposed the convening of a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger and help focus attention on the risk posed by the hair-trigger alert status of thousands of deployed nuclear weapons. Indeed, the consensus Declaration adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit on 8 September 2000 resolved to convene such an international conference in order to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

The very real danger posed by recent developments and the increased threat that weapons, their components, etc., might become accessible to non-State actors, has made the current global security scenario even more precarious. The report of the Secretary-General (A/58/162), submitted in July 2003 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/84 adopted last year, noted that that the Secretary-General will continue to encourage Member States to endeavour to create the conditions that would allow the emergence of an international consensus to hold an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger.

The 2001 report of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (A/56/400) made seven recommendations aimed at significantly reducing the risk of nuclear war. In view of their importance, the recommendations contained in that report bear reiterating. They call for the promotion of a wide-ranging international dialogue on cooperative security; preliminary political and technical measures in preparation for the possibility of convening, at the appropriate time, a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers; the de-alerting of nuclear weapons; the review of nuclear doctrines; further reduction of tactical nuclear weapons as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process; enhancement of security at the global and regional level by promoting increased transparency of all nuclear weapon programmes; and the creation of a climate for implementing nuclear disarmament measures, including through education and training programmes on the dangers of nuclear weapons so as to foster an informed global public opinion able to exert a positive influence on the political will of States to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Some nuclear-weapon States have voiced apprehension about the complex technicalities involved. However, India believes that those technical issues can be overcome, if there is a political commitment to take interim steps to reduce the danger that the state of hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons poses. That could be an interim but important step in the process to negotiate a non-discriminatory and multilaterally verifiable treaty for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. But, of course, that will take a long time and involve difficult negotiations in view of the complex technical aspects involved. That should not deter us, however, from taking interim steps to reduce the danger that nuclear weapons pose, especially now that the global security scenario includes the grave threat from terrorist organizations.

The recommendations contained in the draft resolution are pragmatic and feasible. The draft resolution seeks to reaffirm the desire of the international community to ensure the safety and security of mankind from the dangers of accidental launch and false alarms and the deployment of nuclear weapons at hair-trigger alert. It is simple and unencumbered by any reference to issues that may be contentious.

As has been stated before, support for reducing nuclear alert has come from various distinguished quarters. In 1996, the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons identified that the first step would be to take nuclear forces off alert. A special statement was made by the Pugwash Foundation in that

regard. Non-governmental organizations, environmentalists, scientists, lawyers and physicians have joined in making a call for removing the hair-trigger alert of nuclear forces. The Tokyo Forum Report of 1999 recognized the importance of moving in the direction of reducing the alert status of nuclear forces.

The draft resolution we are introducing proposes to request the Secretary-General to intensify efforts and support initiatives that would contribute towards the full implementation of those recommendations and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

The Indian delegation, along with all the delegations that have sponsored the draft resolution, expresses its sincere hope that the draft will receive the widest possible support in the First Committee. A positive vote for the draft resolution will be the reaffirmation of the will and determination of the international community to take decisive steps towards reducing nuclear danger.

I now turn to introducing draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.36 entitled, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons." This has been sponsored by Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Viet Nam, Zambia and India.

This draft resolution underlines the need to address the threats to humanity and international peace and security posed by the threat of use of nuclear weapons, which will persist as long as certain States claim an exclusive right to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity, claim justification for their use as a legitimate guarantee of their country's security, and continue to develop, produce, stockpile and keep nuclear weapons ready to be used. The possibility of non-State actors also gaining access to nuclear weapons gives another dimension of urgency.

The spectre of nuclear threats from nations and groups cannot be wished away until such weapons are eradicated completely. Only a total prohibition on development, production, stockpiling and use of such weapons and their universal and complete eradication can provide the security that we and our future generations are entitled to.

This threat to humanity needs to be addressed at every possible level. At the political level, which this draft resolution intends to address, there is need for a commitment to reorient nuclear doctrines towards no first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapons in the framework of a legally binding agreement, which would be an important and crucial step towards terminating the legitimacy of the use of nuclear weapons globally.

The International Court of Justice, in its historic advisory opinion in 1996, made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons, and provided a legal underpinning for prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and for nuclear disarmament. It stated that use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable to armed conflicts. It concluded that

> "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (International Court of Justice, Opinion of 8 July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons)

The international community should actively participate in a step-by-step process towards concluding a legally binding convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. There should remain no scope for justification for the use of nuclear weapons.

In the draft resolution, the General Assembly reiterates its request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as an important step in the process of nuclear disarmament. My delegation hopes that the key delegation to the Conference on Disarmament would show required flexibility to enable the Conference to agree on a programme of work and commence negotiations on this issue.

India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. It is in this context that my delegation has been bringing before this Committee, since 1982, this resolution calling for a convention to

be negotiated for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

As we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and its consensus document and programme of action, which remains relevant today, we recall as a matter of deep concern the lack of progress in terms of decisive steps towards ridding the world of nuclear weapons. These concerns were reiterated in the final document of the Kuala Lumpur Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which met in February of this year.

The Indian delegation along with all the delegations that have co-sponsored this draft resolution express the sincere hope that the draft resolution will receive the widest possible support in this Committee.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Proliferation of missiles, especially those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, presents a significant challenge to global security. We have already spoken here about the context in which more countries are acquiring, producing and exporting missile technology, and we have to bear in mind that in the uncertain post-September 11 security environment there is also the possibility that terrorists could obtain deadly missile systems with potentially horrific consequences.

Within the context of the multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation system, United Nations Member States have had a certain degree of success in grappling with the issue of weapons of mass destruction. There is an array of legally binding treaties and treaty bodies in place, yet there is no universal norm, treaty or agreement governing the production, acquisition, transfer or deployment of missiles.

Indeed, as noted by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles in its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, there is not even a universally accepted classification standard for missiles.

Despite this gap in international law, genuine progress on missiles has been made since we last met in this Committee. In November 2002, the international community took a significant step forward in addressing proliferation and other missile-related issues when it launched The Hague Code of Conduct on non-proliferation of missiles.

The Secretary-General emphasized when he welcomed its launch that the Code represents a positive step towards preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles and towards international peace and security.

The Hague Code of Conduct is, of course, a voluntary, non-binding set of principles aimed at concrete confidence-building measures. Subscribing States agree, inter alia, to notify each other in advance of missile and space vehicle launches, and to submit annual reports on their missile and space launch policies and programmes. The Code is the first attempt by the international community to set out some basic principles and commitments in the missile field.

In less than a year, the response to the Code has been very heartening. Well over one hundred States have signed up. Earlier this month in New York, Code subscribers met to reaffirm their commitment to this initiative, to discuss ways to improve and universalize the Code and to submit their first annual reports.

Canada is strongly committed to the Hague Code of Conduct, and we urge those countries that have not yet subscribed to the Code to do so as soon as possible.

In the longer term, Canada hopes that the Hague Code of Conduct will create international momentum and support towards the establishment of a comprehensive and legally binding instrument governing missiles. We recognize that there is a long road ahead towards achieving this goal, and that much more work still needs to be done.

The Code is, of course, not the only approach that has been adapted to address the missile problem. Canada is a founding member and recent chair of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which continues its efforts to restrain the transfer of missiles and related technology.

Canada also believes the United Nations should remain seized of and involved in missile questions. The work done by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on missiles for the fifty-seventh General Assembly was an initial scene-setting exercise. It laid out the scope of the issues, provided a detailed analysis of the factors driving national decisions to develop missile systems and summarized existing bilateral and recent multilateral efforts to address this issue. In its next iteration, the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts should move beyond its initial analysis and begin to consider how the United Nations

could take concrete steps to address and resolve the important questions raised by its first round of work.

At this stage in the consideration of missile issues by the global community, it is important to emphasize the complementarity and mutually reinforcing character of various international efforts in the field, including the Hague Code, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the United Nations process. Canada is also prepared to consider further proposals to advance consideration of missile non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures, and we look forward to working collaboratively with others to address the issues raised concerning ballistic and other missiles.

The Chairman: On Wednesday, as we are slated to consider the subject area of conventional weapons, I would strongly urge delegations, if at all possible, to be prepared, in case time is available at the end of the debate, to continue to discuss and introduce draft resolutions on the clusters initially slated for Thursday, with due regard for flexibility. That does not mean that our programme of work in this regard would be changed, but it would greatly facilitate the smooth running of our meeting, if at all possible, if delegations were prepared tomorrow, in case time is available, also to discuss the subject areas slated for Thursday, namely regional disarmament; confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments; and other disarmament measures and machinery. Of course, in the spirit of flexibility, delegations will be in a position to discuss and introduce any draft resolutions that they might not have had the opportunity to introduce yesterday and today.

In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the Committee will start taking action on draft resolutions and decisions on Monday, 27 October. A total of 10 meetings have been allocated for that third stage of our work, which will last until Friday, 7 November, at the latest.

In this connection, members will recall that, at the organizational meeting of the First Committee, I stated that I would continue the useful device of clustering draft resolutions, which has evolved in the course of the past few years. It is my intention to provide the Committee, as soon as possible, with a paper grouping together the draft resolutions in several clusters with a view to facilitating the task of the Committee at the last stage, when it takes action on the draft resolutions.

Finally, I would like to inform members that this year a total of four draft decisions and 50 draft resolutions have been submitted to the Committee for its consideration under the various agenda items.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to make an announcement.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to inform the Committee that the following countries have joined the sponsors of the following draft resolutions: A/C.1/58/L.1: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ecuador, Jamaica, Jordan the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Somalia and Tonga; A/C.1/58/L.8: Bangladesh, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, El Salvador and the Syrian Arab Republic; A/C.1/58/L.17: Bangladesh and Cameroon; A/C.1/58/L.21: Japan and the Republic of Korea; A/C.1/58/L.25: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.26: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.27: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.29: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.31: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Fiji and Nigeria; A/C.1/58/L.33: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.34: Bangladesh; A/C.1/58/L.38: Bangladesh, Cameroon, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Togo, Tonga and Tuvalu; A/C.1/58/L.39: Costa Rica; A/C.1/58/L.41: Bangladesh and El Salvador; A/C.1/58/L.43: Cameroon, Monaco, Saint Lucia, Somalia and Yemen; A/C.1/58/L.44: El Salvador and the Syrian Arab Republic; A/C.1/58/L.45: the Republic of Korea; A/C.1/58/L.46: Afghanistan, Armenia and Burkina Faso; A/C.1/58/L.49: Bangladesh and Cameroon; A/C.1/58/L.50: the Republic of Korea; A/C.1/58/L.51: Cameroon, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom; and A/C.1/58/L.53: Bangladesh.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): I know this is not on the agenda this morning, but since it appears that we have at least an hour and a half left for this meeting, I should just like to say a few words about the non-paper that was distributed this morning on behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation on the rationalization of the work of the Committee.

The paper speaks for itself. I should emphasize that, as it says, we know what is involved in trying to reduce the number of resolutions and the length of resolutions. Some of the resolutions, in our view, are pretty long and we know that these are political

documents that have to reflect political realities and the variety of views on certain issues. We need a lot of time to look into these details and we do not want to prejudge any decision on the length of resolutions and so on.

What we have done, therefore, is to look at the number of hours we spend on this. For instance, the paper notes that exactly 28 meetings are scheduled for this session. What we have done is to readjust it. We feel it to be of particular importance that deadlines are given for resolutions without giving delegations — particularly smaller delegations — time to examine them and to hold consultations. There may be three, four or five consultations going on at the same time and we cannot cover all of them — not that we are interested in all resolutions, but there are some in which we are particularly interested in and in whose drafting we would like to have an input.

Some delegations have complained that the resolutions we adopt are the same old resolutions with only so-called technical changes. We need to examine those resolutions. I feel that, maybe at the next session, if we take a decision on this we can give States the opportunity to reduce or examine the language of some of those resolutions.

We ask ourselves: Who is the target audience of our resolutions? Foreign affairs or the records of the Assembly? Because international security and disarmament are so important to mankind, we feel that, gradually, we must be able to address our message to the international community at large, to people and students. There is so much emphasis on disarmament education. What kind of education is it? Is it just deep research or do we want to appeal to the people that we represent? These are the things we want to look into.

As I said, in the non-paper we also examine whether we need to have more resolutions on the subject of the rationalization of the work of the Committee. Do we have to get another resolution? Do we also have to ask the Secretary-General to come up with a report on the subject? Let us examine that.

This is not written in stone; we just offer it as a small contribution to our work. As it says in the chapeau, we are looking at the rationalization also from the point of view of what the Assembly is doing. We thought at one time that we might even consider reducing the number of meetings, but we cannot suggest that now because we have to work in parallel with the Fourth Committee. We have to see what that Committee is doing, and that is why we restricted it to the exact number of meetings that we have to deal with during this session.

We therefore present this not as a formal draft resolution, but with the idea that we might give delegations the opportunity to think about it and see what we can do.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The issue of the revitalization of the work of the First Committee has been raised by our colleague from Sierra Leone and I thank him for his contribution. However, I would remind representatives that we have not yet agreed on such a mandate for the Committee. What we have agreed is to have informal discussions of this issue, as we did last week. This is just a reminder, since these discussions will be recorded.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.